Telecom services in rural areas

1706. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any efforts have been taken to boost telecom services in the rural areas for the last two years;

(b) if so, the details of the development in the rural areas; and

(c) if not, the reasons for not initiating efforts in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. For boosting telecom services in rural areas, it has been planned to convert all Single Based Module (SBM) exchanges and 256 Port C-DOT exchanges into Remote Switching Units (RSUs) and Access Node Rural Automatic Exchange (AN-RAX). Emphasis is also being given for coverage through wireless.

(b) The total number of Short Distance Charging Area (SDCA) covered with Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) technology till 31.12.2004 is 1,748. The new exchanges opened during the years 2003-04 and 2004-05 upto 31.12.2004 is 317 and 127 respectively. During the year 2003-04, total No. of 8,65,182 new connections were provided through fixed lines and WLL in rural areas. For the current year till 31.12.2004, 7,65,216 connections have been provided.

(c) Does not arise in view of para (a) and (b) above.

Common charter of telecom services

1707. SHRIMATI S. G. INDIRA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India had finalised a common charter of telecom services to provide self regulation by phone companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the charter would be reviewed and upgraded at regular intervals; and